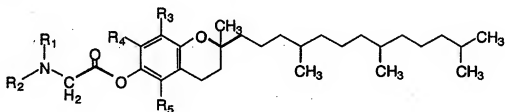


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (canceled).
2. (previously presented): A whitening cosmetic composition comprising a tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or a salt thereof, said ester being a compound represented by a formula (1) described below:



wherein R₁ and R₂ independently represent a straight chain or branched alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbons or a hydrogen atom; and R₃, R₄, and R₅ independently represent a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; with the proviso that R₁ and R₂ do not represent a hydrogen atom at the same time, and that R₃, R₄, and R₅ do not represent methyl at the same time.

3. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, wherein the tocopherol alkylglycine ester is at least one compound selected from a γ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester and a δ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester.

4. (canceled).

5. (canceled).

6. (canceled).

7. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, characterized in that the tocopherol alkylglycine ester is a γ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester.

8. (original): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 7, characterized in that the γ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester is a d- γ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester.

9. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, characterized in that the tocopherol alkylglycine ester is a δ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester.

10. (original): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 9, characterized in that the δ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester is a d- δ -tocopherol alkylglycine ester.

11. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, characterized in that the tocopherol alkylglycine ester is tocopherol dimethylglycine ester.

12. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, characterized in that the salt of a tocopherol alkylglycine ester is a salt of an organic acid or an inorganic acid.

13. (original): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 12, wherein the salt of a tocopherol alkylglycine ester is hydrochloride.

14. (previously presented): The whitening cosmetic composition according to Claim 2, wherein an added amount of the tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or the salt thereof ranges from 0.1 to 10% by mass.

15. (currently amended): A method for ~~preventing~~ reducing or eliminating pigmentation of the skin, comprising a step of applying an effective amount of the whitening cosmetic composition according to any of claims 2, 3, and 7-14 to the skin.

16. (currently amended): A method of using a tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or a salt thereof, comprising applying a composition containing a tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or a salt thereof for ~~preventing~~ reducing or eliminating pigmentation of the skin.

17. (currently amended): A method of using a tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or a salt thereof comprising preparing a pharmaceutical agent with a tocopherol alkylglycine ester and/or a salt thereof for use in ~~preventing~~ reducing or eliminating pigmentation of the skin.